



H.Res. 137 - Honoring the life and six decades of public service of Jacob Birnbaum and especially his commitment freeing Soviet Jews from religious, cultural, and communal extinction

Floor Situation

H.Res. 137 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) on February 7, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

H.Res. 137 is expected to be considered on the floor on June 18, 2007.

Summary

H.Res. 137 honors the life and six decades of public service of Jacob Birnbaum and especially his commitment to freeing Soviet Jews from religious, cultural, and communal extinction.

Background

Jacob Birnbaum was born on December 10, 1926, and December 10 has been designated as International Human Rights Day. He performed relief work with victims of Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism from 1946 through 1951, and then worked with the disintegrating Jewish communities of North Africa in the mid-1950s and early 1960s.

In 1964, Birnbaum moved to New York and founded the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) on April 27 of the same year. The SSSJ utilized nonviolent methods, including marches, rallies, publication of extensive educational materials, and meetings with government officials, to organize and activate students to take direct action in the cause of freeing Soviet Jews trapped behind the Iron Curtain, utilizing the slogan 'Let My People Go.'

On May 20, 1965 Birnbaum organized the "Jericho march" in Washington, DC, where he and the first SSSJ chairman Rabbi Shlomo Riskin met with senior Soviet diplomat Anatoly Myshkov, and thereafter the students circled the Embassy of the Soviet Union to the sound of shofars, then moved on to the Department of State for a vigorous discussion, and finally arrived in Lafayette Park in front of the White House for a rally addressed by Members of Congress and the reading of an Appeal to Conscience.

Birnbaum continues to assist institutions for the Jewish education of former Soviet Jews as part of his 'Let My People Know' campaign.

Staff Contact

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